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Nixon Foreign Policy Called Full of Contradictions

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The Nixon administration was charged by a cross-section of intellectual critics yesterday with pursuing a foreign policy that is studded with contradictions.

Improved U.S. relations with the Soviet Union and China were widely praised in the second day of a national seminar, "Pacem in Terris," sponsored by The Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions. But the administration was overwhelmingly criticized in the forum for lack of a coherent strategy to match its "declaratory policy," as former Defense Secretary Clark Clifford described it.

While there have been "profound changes in the international setting," Clifford said last night, "if we turn from declaratory policy to the hard facts of [defense] budgets and forces, we find incredibly little change."

"We are being asked to spend more, not less" on "overblown military forces and hardware" unnecessary for national security at a time of acute challenge to the credibility of the government and the national economy, Clifford said.

This only illustrates, said Richard Barnet, co-director of the Institute for Policy Studies, "that national security is a sufficiently slippery concept" in the hands of policy makers to be manipulated at will.

"Most of the changes in U.S.-Soviet relations," said Barnet, "took place in Washington, not Moscow." He said, "The 'mellowing process' which was supposed to be the result of surrounding the mightiest land masses in the world with nuclear rockets has, much like 'peace with honor' in Vietnam, been simply stipulated."

Threats Redefined

In fact, said Barnet, "The military might of the Soviet Union has never been greater. What has happened is that the foreign military threats have been redefined to a manageable level."

The conference, attended yesterday by about 1,500 persons, is looked on by its hopeful sponsors as the opening of a national dialogue to stimulate a new consensus on foreign policy in the aftermath of the divisive Indochina war. But even that premise was challenged by some participants on grounds that U.S. money continues American involvement in that war.

With its own society and moral standards in disarray, said Prof. Hans J. Morgenthau of the City University of New York, "Today America offers the world not something to emulate, but to avoid."

American policy "is riddled with internal tensions and contradictions," said Prof. Stanley Hoffmann of Harvard University.

"The great art of the administration" under the Nixon Doctrine, he said, "has been in making many believe that we had transformed, or were transforming, the 'U.S. world system' into a pluralistic, multipolar, 'stable structure of peace.' In reality, we have only changed the method of operation and control of that system" through "a policy of indirect primacy."

For real transformation of U.S. policy from a pattern of over-commitment abroad, said Hoffmann, "we will have to see ourselves again as one player among many, rather than as a specially annointed missionary or teacher . . ."

In a forum on national defense policy last night, Herbert York, former science adviser to Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy and Defense Department director of research and engineering, said the nation's highest priority should be to "get rid of" the nuclear strategy of mutual assured destruction as soon as possible.

'Terrible Strategy'

"It is a terrible strategy," said York, because: "If for any political or psychological or technical reason deterrence should fail, the physical, biological and social consequences [of nuclear war] would be completely out of line with any reasonable view of the national objectives of the U.S.A. or the Soviet Union."

Besides killing most of the urban population of both nations and "well over one-half of the town and country populations," said York, a full nuclear exchange could result in perhaps "10 million casualties from cancer and leukemia in countries situated well away from the two main protagonists."

York said this is because the weapons we rely on for deterrence are "from 10 to 100 times as murderous and destructive" as they need be to satisfy that purpose.

In negotiations with the Soviet Union, said York, the United States should start by eliminating nuclear weapons that deliver the most megatons of destruction. He proposed that the United States eliminate its long-range bombers and its 54 Titan missiles, and the Soviet Union eliminate its "300 very large SS-9 missiles plus a relatively small intercontinental bomber force," with replacements barred.

In addition, York said that the United States should eliminate one-half of its Minuteman missiles that are not being converted into Minuteman III weapons, and also eliminate the 10 of its 41 Polaris submarines not scheduled to be converted to carry Poseidon missiles, in exchange for matching Soviet offsets.

Even cutting this much "overkill capacity," said York, would little reduce the nuclear war threat to urban populations, but would considerably decrease casualties in rural areas and small towns.

In an argument familiar to nuclear specialists, Prof. Albert Wohlstetter of the University of Chicago, a consultant to government agencies, countered that the essential factor in reducing mass destruction of civilians is not the size of the force cut, but "how the force would be aimed and used."

[illegible] ways aimed at military targets," said Wohlstetter, and a policy of "attacking military targets that minimizes unintended civilian casualties would offer incentives for an adversary to reciprocate," limiting civilian casualties.

York and other critics contend there is no way to assure that an adversary will follow such a pattern of targeting.

'New Strategy'

Vice Adm. Stansfield Turner, president of the Naval War College and former director of the Navy's Systems Analysis Division, agreed that "we must search for a new strategy for world security which contains inherant incentives for avoiding nuclear war."

But today, Turner said, what is called "overkill or overinsurance may be the only practical substitute for mutual trust and confidence. If it relaxes fingers on the triggers of nuclear holocaust, it may not be all bad."

Paul Warnke, former assistant secretary of defense, said earlier that "perhaps the talent most needed in foreign policy for the decade ahead will be that of making friends out of former enemies without losing those present allies whose continued friendship is of key importance to our national interests." This, he said, has been the Nixon administration's greatest failing.

Debate continued in the conference yesterday on whether to demand better treatment of dissidents and potential emigrants in the Soviet Union as a condition for trade with the United States.

Prof. Marshall Shulman of Columbia University agreed with the Nixon administration that first priority in official U.S. policy should be placed on "reducing the danger of nuclear war," and that "public and frontal demands upon the Soviet Union in regard to domestic affairs" should be avoided.

Individuals and groups protesting "the repugnent aspects of the Soviet system," includ-

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ing "the barbaric throttling of the creative life of its intellectuals and artists," he said should apply such protests "even-handedly," to all nations. "Otherwise," said Shulman, "the motivation for these protests is suspect, and our moral commitment is clouded."

Panelist John Paton Davies, former U.S. diplomat, however, expressed the more popular view in the conference. He said, "We have, in effect, made a deal with the Kremlin" by which it profits from detente, and it is "little" to ask that it should "stop affronting the civilized world with savage abuse of its most worthy subjects."